community health workers to work without payment does not apply in Iran. Community health workers receive salaries, work in clinics and have curative as well as preventive functions. Training of community health workers for Afghanistan has been suggested as a possible project to undertake in Iran.

However, community health workers are expensive in terms of administrative time required to support them. They are also not effective unless they fit into a well-run curative service. It would therefore be difficult for the health authorities in Afghanistan to employ Afghan community health workers trained in Iran during the initial period of reconstruction.

If community health workers are trained, this should be in accordance with the guidelines of the Afghan Ministry of Health. It would also be necessary to train a cadre of supervisors and trainers to provide long-term support to community health workers. The experience of community health worker training for Afghan refugees in Pakistan should be taken into account.

(iv) It was inevitable that, after 12 year of relative isolation from international assistance, officials of the Iranian Government had little experience of NGOs. There appeared to be a misunderstanding that NGOs provided money and materials to governments. The mission therefore had to stress that NGOs implement their own projects, in close cooperation with governments, but without using government staff or services.

It may be useful for key officials within the Iranian Government to visit NGO projects in Pakistan in order to familiarise themselves with the types of programmes which NGOs run.

(b) Water and sanitation

These are major problem areas in Zahedan and Zabul. Zahedan has no access to water of a reasonable quality and relies exclusively on brackish water from underground sources. There is also not an adequate supply. Plans which the provincial authorities have drawn up to pump water from the Helmand river at Zabul to Zahedan are under consideration by the central Government. Funding is the major constraint, although there are also certain engineering difficulties to be overcome to pump the water from a low lying area to one of high elevation.

Zabul suffers from the regular flooding of the Helmand River and has a high ground water table. There is therefore a significant amount of surface water and poor drainage.

In Zahedan, there is a piped water system supplying the salty water to the main part of the city. However, this system does not extend to the outlying areas where most of the refugees live. Because of the overall shortage of water, plans which UNHCR had a couple of years ago to extend the piped system to the refugee areas were not pursued. There are water purification plants in a few locations to provide drinking water but these are some

distance from the refugee areas.

Of the Afghan refugees, 20% buy their water from hand carts, 30% use the water from the piped system and 50% draw the brackish water from wells within their personal compounds. Because most of the refugee houses are small, they often do not have an adequate distance between the latrines and the wells, causing water to become contaminated. The presence of livestock and the fact that there is often more than one family per house compounds this problem. There is a high incidence of water-borne diseases and of giardia arising from the use of contaminated water.

General recommendations

It is recommended that tube wells be dug in public areas within refugee neighbourhoods so that a reasonably plentiful supply can be obtained for uses other than drinking. It is hoped that this would not put too great a strain on the overall water supply. This would limit the use of contaminated water from wells within houses. It would also make it possible to achieve better hygiene in schools and clinics. The prior authority of the Ministry of Health in Zahedan would need to be sought because of the possible impact on the city's water supplies.

It is further recommended that pit latrines be improved through the provision of concrete slabs and ventilation pipes. Such a programme has been very effective in the refugee villages in Pakistan.

In addition, it is proposed that public baths be provided in refugee areas.

Finally, it is thought that it might be worth learning more about a low-cost garbage collection project carried out by ILO in Cairo in order to see whether a similar programme could be tried in Zahedan.

All of the above proposals are within the capacity of NGOs to implement.

In Zabul, NGOs could investigate methods of achieving better drainage of excess water in order to reduce the malaria risk and deal with sanitation problems which arise from the high level of ground water.

It is intended that these proposals would benefit both the Iranian and Afghan populations of these two areas.

There is also work to be done at the spontaneous settlement at Niatak to improve water and sanitation facilities. Presently, water is brought in by tanker on a poor road. When it becomes flooded, the tanker cannot get through. The access road into the camp also needs to be improved.

In addition, we were advised by UNHCR that there is scope for NGO assistance to increase the supply of safe water to the refugees

in Khorasan. This would supplement the work already being undertaken by UNHCR.

UNHCR have also proposed a project for implementation by NGOs which would focus on the provision of training relating to sanitation in schools and on the improvement of sanitary facilities on school premises.

(c) Education

Although there is a relatively low school attendance by Afghan children in Khorasan, particularly above the primary level, it is not thought to be sufficiently serious to justify an NGO involvement.

However, in Sistan-Baluchistan, out of an estimated 80,000 Afghan refugee children of primary school age, only 20,000 are reported to attend school. This is partly due to poverty-related factors but there is also an acute shortage of school buildings. One UNHCR-funded school had 70 children per class in the intake year with three shifts per day. There is also a shortage of teachers and teaching materials. It is therefore possible that the number of children attending primary school is even lower than 20,000.

Within the school population, there is a preponderance of boys. For example, the number of boys attending Iranian schools from the Afghan refugee population increased by 70% between the 1989-90 and 1990-91 academic years. The number of girls, by contrast, only increased by 22%.

General recommendations

It is recommended that NGOs assist with the establishment of more schools, if proposed by the Government, with the improvement of existing school buildings and with the provision of supplies. The NGO mission team was concerned at the use of metal prefabricated school buildings in an area which suffers from extremes of heat and cold. There may be a case for training and employing Afghans as primary school teachers in view of the shortages.

(d) Psycho-social needs

The mission was concerned at the presence of unaccompanied children on the streets of Zahedan and at the possibility that they might be organised by adults for financial gain.

We recommend that a study be undertaken of the situation of street children to ascertain the extent to which they are at risk of abuse and to identify possible programmes to support them.

A proportion of the Afghan refugee children will have suffered from traumatic experiences as a result of the war. The lessons from a UNICEF programme already implemented in Mozambique and Yugoslavia, where teachers were provided with appropriate

training to assist traumatised children, may be useful.

(e) Training

The mission team gave consideration to the option of providing training to Afghan refugees in the skills which would be of relevance to their successful repatriation to Afghanistan. However, it was felt that, given the time required to set up such programmes, it was better to wait to see what the pattern of repatriation is in 1993. If it appears to be the case that some sections of the refugee population are unlikely to return for two to three years, it may be appropriate to set up training programmes in Iran. However, this should be balanced against the benefits of providing such training within Afghanistan, where its immediate relevance may lead to a greater commitment by participants and, therefore, greater retention of the information given. Mine awareness training should be considered in this light. This potential area of work should therefore be kept under review.

(f) Income-generation

Because of the level of poverty of many of the refugees, there may be scope for NGOs to set up income-generation programmes. Ideally, these should be capable of being transferred with the refugees into Afghanistan. They should therefore relate to traditional skills practiced in the areas of origin. They should also have regard to the capacity of refugees to take them on and the present overcrowded living conditions in some areas such as Zahedan. Possible areas of work are carpet/guelim weaving, woolen yarn bleaching and dyeing, knitting, tree-planting and poultry-rearing.

6. UNHCR programme

In addition to its protection mandate, UNHCR has played a major role, in cooperation with the Government of Iran, in drawing up and implementing the repatriation programme.

It has also had a care and maintenance function, in support of the Government which, it should be emphasised, has taken the major responsibility.

To this end, UNHCR has procured equipment and medicines for the Government health service. It has also paid the salaries of Iranian community health workers and Afghan health workers in areas of high refugee concentrations. In addition, it has established health posts in south Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchistan.

UNHCR has also provided funds to the Government to drill wells to improve the water supply in Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchistan and for the construction of bakeries and bath houses. These

projects have yet to be implemented.

In the education sector, UNHCR has erected a small number of prefabricated schools in refugee areas. They have no involvement in the running or resourcing of the schools.

UNHCR attempted to run income-generation programmes but abandoned this sector two years ago because it did not have the implementing capacity.

However, a carpet-weaving project will be started in south Khorasan in 1993, as part of government-implemented programme to reverse the desertification process in that area. UNHCR has played an important role in the establishment of the South Khorasan Rangeland Rehabilitation programme, as it is called, bringing in the International Fund for Agricultural Development to prepare and appraise the project and seeking funding from the international community. However, the project has been severely hampered by a shortage of funds.

7. Cross-border work

From our visit to western Afghanistan, it would appear that NGO programmes can be based in Herat without too much difficulty. There is not, therefore, the need presently for NGOs to base their operations in Iran and work cross-border

Further, the supplies which NGOs are likely to need are, for the most part, available in the bazaar or from the UN. Other supplies can be obtained in Iran or Uzbekistan or can be brought in easily from Europe via Odessa and Turkmenistan.

It is also possible for NGO staff to travel to Herat on the UN plane from Islamabad, although there are constraints with this method of access.

However, it would be extremely helpful to the reconstruction process in western Afghanistan if NGOs could have easier access to and from Iran for their personnel and supplies.

To this end, multiple entry visas would be especially useful as the requirement to give 2-3 weeks notice for each visa application precludes people crossing the border frequently to procure supplies or leaving Afghanistan quickly if the security situation deteriorates.

It should also be noted that the visa application process can be speeded up considerably if there is a need to respond to a humanitarian emergency.

It is hoped that NGOs can obtain exemptions from customs duties or fees on the import or export of supplies and exemption from taxes on purchases within Iran. These are issues which the bridgehead team and UNHCR will discuss with the Government of Iran.

It is necessary to obtain temporary license plates for vehicles crossing the border into Afghanistan.

8. Setting up NGO programmes

Permission to operate needs to be obtained from BAFIA but there is, as yet, no formal registration process.

Information on humanitarian needs, logistics, structures to relate to, important contacts etc. can be obtained from the ICRI office in Tehran.

Visas for personnel should be applied for well in advance. ICRI will be able to facilitate this, with the support of UNHCR, Tehran.

UNHCR support may also be needed for the procurement of supplies, the importation of goods and to facilitate the smooth entry of personnel into Iran and their departure. The local UNHCR offices in Mashhad and Zahedan can assist with contacts with the BAFIA representatives at these provincial centres.

It is very important to comply with Government procedures, to be clear in stating objectives, to do what you have undertaken to do and to report back on constraints.

The mission team has already emphasised to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran the independence of NGOs from Governments and UN agencies. Thus, while expressing its appreciation of the Government of Iran's concern to accompany the mission into Afghanistan in order to provide protection, it stated that it would need to deal directly with the authorities in Afghanistan for this purpose.

It can take time for the Government structure to process transactions such as customs clearance and visa applications. It is essential to have a representative in Iran who can assist with this. UNHCR and ICRI can perform this role during the initial period of NGO involvement.

NGOs should also take into account in their planning that permission may be needed from the central Government in Tehran before a local project can be agreed with a provincial or district authority. If a Government Ministry other than MOI is involved, MOI would need to be kept informed. All this may take time.

It is also important for the Government to be made aware of the procedures which each NGO has to go through in order to implement programmes.

MOI would also want to send an escort for any travel in the border areas or to assist in the making of initial introductions in Tehran or at the local level. MOI wishes to have a degree of control over NGO programmes but this was not felt by the mission

team to be excessive. In the initial period of NGO involvement in Iran, trust will be the key, and it will be very important for NGOs to keep to their commitments, and behave in a correct way.

It is also important that NGOs act in a spirit of respect for the Islamic values of Iran. It is an arrestable offence for men or women to dress or behave immodestly. Quiet unobtrusive behaviour is advised. Women should wear long coats and head scarves.

Provided that these basic rules are observed, normal life can be pursued. Foreigners can move freely except in border areas.

9. NGO involvement

It is hoped that NGOs will recognise the importance of responding to the needs outlined in this report. It should again be emphasised that the Government of Iran has provided for between two and three million refugees for up to fourteen years with very little international support.

NGOs should understand that the initial period of NGO involvement will be a learning process for both sides.

It is important to emphasise at all times that, although NGOs will wish to implement their own programmes independently, they will do so in cooperation with the Government.

Although the major priority is to facilitate the voluntary and dignified return of Afghan refugees, the Government of Iran would welcome the assistance of NGOs in meeting the needs of other refugee populations within Iran, including those from Iraq and Azerbaijan.

10. Summary of findings

1. There are clear and immediate needs to be met in Sistan-Baluchestan, particularly in the fields of water, sanitation, health and education. We recommend that NGOs give early priority to the establishment of programmes.

2. We do not identify an immediate need for NGO involvement in Khorasan but this will be kept under review.

3. NGOs should consider whether they can assist in the repatriation programme of the Government and UNHCR through the provision of health care at transit centres and border exit stations.

WESTERN AFGHANISTAN

1. Introduction

The purpose of the mission was to identify programme opportunities for NGOs relating to the reconstruction of five western provinces of Afghanistan - Herat, Badghis, Ghor, Farah and Nimroz.

The agreed objectives were as follows:

> " evaluate rehabilitation needs in Western Afghanistan in technical areas (agriculture, shelter, roads, sanitation, health, nutrition, psycho-social needs etc.) in order that project planning and proposals may take place over the winter months (with a view to fund-raising and coordination with overall UN activities in Afghanistan), and actual rehabilitation activities may begin in early spring "

The mission team spent a week in Herat from 29th November to 6th December 1992, during which visits were made to Enjil and Zendajan and to irrigation projects 20 miles north-east of Herat. The UN team were not yet operative in Badghis, Farah and Nimroz and were not therefore able to provide information on these provinces. However, a mission was planned to Badghis shortly after our visit.

Information was provided on conditions in Ghor based on a recent UN mission, but the ICRI mission was not able to visit the area.

The mission was facilitated by UNHCR and the other UN agencies present in Herat. We are very grateful to them for all the assistance which they extended.

It was fortunate that the team was able to meet a group of donors who visited Herat for a day while the team was there. We were invited to follow up the contacts made.

2. Description of the area

(a) Herat Province

Herat Province borders on Iran in the west and Turkmenistan in the north. The main centre of economic activity is the Hari Rud river valley which extends from Islam Qala in the west to Chest-i-Sharif and beyond in the east. The main population centres have traditionally been Herat city, Enjil and Zendajan. There are a number of smaller district centres. Outside the Hari Rud valley, much of the Province is scrubland and barren mountains.

The population in 1979 was estimated to be 749,111 according to the Government census. The UN made a further estimate in 1990, giving a population of 870,400, of which 487,700 were living in Iran as refugees.

Herat city is a major cultural centre, with important historic buildings and rich traditions.

Wheat is the main crop. It was not a food-deficit area before the war. There used to be a well-established silk-worm industry.

Irrigation is the principal means of providing water for crops, through canals and karezes. There is some rainfall during the winter months.

(b) Herat City

The city consists largely of mud dwellings. The streets are un-tarmacked and very dusty. Traditional shops and small workshops line the streets. There are relatively few cars, and most people travel on foot or bicycle. There are brightly decorated horses and carriages for passenger transport and many goods are carried by horse and cart or on the backs of donkeys. Much of the motorised transport is in the form of jeeps and lorries. Open drainage ditches run either side of the streets and main roads. There are some large houses and public buildings. The city retains its traditional character.

(c) Badghis Province

The 1979 population was reported to be 233,613. In 1990 the estimate was 317,530, of which 167,100 were refugees in Iran.

It is an area to which access has always been difficult because of poor road conditions.

It suffered badly from locust and sunn pest infestations a couple of years ago and the UN has maintained a programme to combat these since that time.

(d) Ghor Province

Ghor Province consists of rugged mountains and narrow canyons. It is possibly the most impoverished of the provinces of Afghanistan due to the extremely poor growing conditions. Erosion, flooding and lack of access to assistance from the Government and international agencies have meant that yields have been extremely low. Road access to the province is very difficult, due to disrepair and mountain conditions, and the area is cut off for several months during the winter. The province has suffered from periodic famines.

Livestock has been the main source of income. Karakul, sheep and goats are raised.

The 1979 population was recorded as 353,494.

(e) Farah Province

The province of Farah is low lying and largely desert. There are two river valleys, the Khash Rud and Farah Rud, which provide

irrigation. Flooding is common in March and April, after which the climate becomes extremely hot and dry. Road conditions are bad and access to the area is therefore slow.

The population at the time of the 1979 census was 234,621. The UN estimate for 1990 was 377,800 of which 248,660 were refugees in Iran.

The main crops include cereals, fruit and vegetables.

Living conditions are thought to be poor, due to endemic poverty, and the area was previously reported to have an extremely high infant mortality rate.

(f) Nimroz Province

Nimroz is largely characterized by rocky, barren deserts. The Helmand river which runs through the province provides much of the cultivation, together with the Sistan basin adjacent to the Iranian border. The Sistan area is subject to flooding.

Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main activities of the area. The principle crops are wheat, barley, maize and fruit.

The 1979 population estimate was 103,634. The UN estimated the population in 1990 to be 139,850, of which 89,040 were refugees in Iran and Pakistan.

3. Political control and security

It would appear that Ismail Khan has effective control of Herat but we were not able to determine the degree of control or influence which he has over the provinces of Badghis, Ghor and Farah. However, the security situation was sufficiently good in western Ghor and Badghis for the UN to undertake missions.

Ismail Khan was reported to have taken the strategic airbase of Shindand in Farah, thus removing a potential threat to the security of Herat.

There are mines to the west of Herat city covering a large security belt created by the previous Government and the Soviet forces. These are mapped and so are easy to delineate.

There are also mines in Enjil and Zendajan to the south and south-east of Herat which are isolated and scattered and thus represent a greater threat to returning refugees.

4. Situation analysis

(a) Western Afghanistan

The Herat area has suffered from very considerable destruction as a result of the war. The western suburbs of Herat were

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL MISSION UNDERTAKEN

TO IRAN AND WESTERN AFGHANISTAN

FROM 20TH NOVEMBER TO 16TH DECEMBER 1992

AS DELIVERED TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM

FOR REFUGEES IN IRAN (ICRI)

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the technical mission were twofold:

- to identify assistance activities relating to Afghan refugees inside Iran on which NGOs could collaborate with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and UNHCR, with a minimum start-up delay

- to evaluate rehabilitation needs in Western Afghanistan in order that project planning, fundraising and proposals may take place over the winter months and that actual rehabilitation activities may begin in early spring

These objectives were identified with a view to securing the successful voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to Afghanistan and their reintegration.

The four members of the technical mission were accompanied by two people appointed to operate as a bridgehead team in Iran for an initial period of six months to facilitate NGO programmes.

The combined six-person team visited Tehran, Mashhad, Zahedan and Zabul in Iran and Herat in Afghanistan. The skills within the team covered all the main sectors: water, sanitation, agriculture, irrigation, roads, education, health and social needs.

The mission lasted for almost a month, from 20th November to 16th December 1992, of which three weeks were spent in Iran.

This report necessarily gives greater attention to the needs in western Afghanistan because of the sheer scale of the destruction occasioned during the fourteen years of conflict. This can also be seen as a reflection of the Iranian Government's willingness to meet the basic needs of the Afghan refugee population over this long period, with the result that there is not a need for NGOs to play a major role in providing for the refugees within Iran. There are, nonetheless, substantial needs to be met and these are identified in the report.

There is also a greater focus on Afghanistan because of the importance which the Iranian Government attaches to a succesful repatriation programme.

flattened through bombing raids by the Soviet-backed Government, aimed to create three security rings, and these are mined.

To the south and south-west of Herat, the areas of Enjil and Zendajan have been reduced to rubble, with the more recent bombardment being during a period of intensive conflict between Ismail Khan's forces and the Najibullah Government during 1991. Both of these areas are also mined. Before the war, these districts had the largest population outside Herat city, and it was also the area of greatest cultivation.

Agricultural production is well below pre-war levels, but the trading sector seems to be reasonably buoyant. The bazaar in Herat is well-stocked, and apparently thriving. The UN agencies appear to be able to meet the food security and other emergency needs of the population over the winter. However, there is a major job to be done to reconstruct the basic infrastructure. Present fuel shortages could become more acute.

The population of Herat has increased considerably since the change of Government in April, due to security, economic and political factors.

There are concerns that refugees will return from Iran over the winter in greater numbers than can be absorbed but it does not appear that there is undue concern at the prospect of reasonably large number of refugees returning from the spring onwards.

It is felt that returning refugees will be needed to repair houses and irrigation systems and cultivate the land, particularly in Enjil and Zendajan. There is an assumption that the UN will provide the necessary food security and support to make this possible.

In the event that refugees do return in large numbers during the winter, the international community will be called upon to provide emergency food aid and other emergency support. Such a response would require an effective coordination structure.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is organizing onward transport for refugees to the northern provinces of Badghis, Faryab, Jozjan and Balkh and, to a lesser extent, to provinces further east.

(b) Ghor Province

Although we were not able to visit Ghor, we benefited from a verbal report from the WFP representative, who had just completed a mission to the area. He advised that the bazaars had virtually no food. Most of the irrigation systems were not functioning, and farmers were reliant on rain-fed farming. Crops were infected by sunn pest. He had responded by sending over a thousand tonnes of food aid immediately. He urged that high priority be given to a development programme there. He hoped that a NGO would be able to take this on, to supplement the support planned by Medecins du Monde to the hospital in Chaghcharan.

It is recommended that NGOs with a development brief consider the establishment of a long-term development programme in Ghor. It would be useful for interested agencies to consult with Oxfam, which has been running a development programme in a very similar area in Hazarajat to the east of Ghor.

(c) Badghis Province

WFP was planning a mission to the area shortly after our visit. We had no information on conditions there.

(d) Farah Province

The UN had no information on this area. While we are aware of fighting having occurred, we do not know what the level of destruction is or how serious the mines problem is.

(e) Nimroz Province

Our information on this province relates mainly to the serious flooding which has occurred in recent years, due partly to the neglect of irrigation channels. This has particularly affected Zaranj, as well as Zabul on the other side of the border.

(f) Herat Province

The level of destruction in Enjil and Zendajan is such that it lacks a basic infrastructure of services. It is also almost totally depopulated. The present estimate is that it currently has 20% of its pre-war population. Many of those living there have returned recently from Iran. The hospital in Zendajan is operated from what is virtually an empty shell. There is no glass in the windows, and some walls are demolished. The staff appear to be acting beyond their competence.

The irrigation systems are in a state of disrepair and major work is needed to bring the land under cultivation again, and to protect it from the spring floods.

(g) Herat city

Apart from the area to the west which has been almost totally destroyed (the ancient minarets and the nearby domed structure remain standing amidst the rubble) and some damage to buildings in the adjoining area, there is little visible evidence within the city of the fourteen years of conflict. The mosque is still intact, as is much of the old market. However, it is difficult not to be constantly aware of the heavily mined area to the west and there are occasional casualties. Children, in particular, tend to stray into the danger zone.

The basic infrastructure of services has been seriously affected by the war. The city lacks adequate access to a safe water supply and the drainage system has been neglected.

The supply of electricity is erratic because of the destruction

of power cables and equipment. Most people rely on generators for electricity supply and these are also used in public buildings and by market traders and repair shops, for their electrical equipment. Fuel for the generators is in short supply.

5. The existing Government infrastructure

It is difficult to establish how effective the local administration is in Herat. It would appear from the headed notepaper issued by the various government bodies that there is an overall structure known as the Emirate of South-Western Afghanistan. Within this, there are directorates and departments covering most, if not all, of the functions previously or presently carried out by the Government of Afghanistan in Kabul. These include a Directorate of Foreign Affairs. The Director indicated a wish to meet NGO representatives on their arrival in Herat and to have fortnightly meetings with aid agencies so as to be kept informed about their operations.

There are also, for example, traffic police, soldiers in military uniform and a system for the registration of cars purchased. The Emirate has its own TV and radio stations, which cover a 10 km radius.

The Directorate of Repatriation works effectively with IOM to process the transportation of refugees to the northern provinces. The Department of Rural Development has engineers who are committed to the task of restoring irrigation systems. The Ministry of Agriculture also has an enthusiastic staff who would welcome an NGO input. All the officers that we met, or who were spoken of by UN staff, were cooperative and willing to work with outside agencies. There is therefore reasonable scope for infrastructure-building.

Ismail Khan takes the major decisions on policy matters and makes himself readily available to UN agencies for this purpose.

6. Existing needs

(a) Emergency needs

(i) Food security

The World Food Programme, working in conjunction with other UN agencies, estimates that it is able to meet the basic food requirements for Herat and Ghor Provinces over the winter. It is also in a position to provide for up to 500,000 returning refugees next year. It presently has no information on the food situation in Badghis or Farah.

However, if refugees return from Iran in large numbers over the winter, or the number of returning refugees exceeds half a million next year, it is likely to need additional resources. If there is a sudden influx on a huge scale, it may have to set in

motion the procedures for securing emergency food aid.

It is recommended that both donors and NGOs with the capacity to respond to food emergency situations make contingency plans so that they can take the appropriate action, if so requested.

(ii) Shelter

The population of Herat city has expanded over recent months as a result of an influx of people from other parts of the province. This was said to be due to Ismail Khan extending his control over the whole province and people from outlying areas feeling secure about coming into the city. It may also be due to the overthrow of the Najibullah regime and men of military age thus being able to enter Herat without fear of being conscripted. Economic factors may also play a part.

To these have been added the steady stream of refugees who are returning from Iran. UNHCR has provided support to these returnees in the form of tools and wheat, to assist them while they rebuild their homes.

Assuming that there is no significant return of refugees over the winter, there is unlikely to be a need for emergency aid.

However, as indicated above, refugees may decide to return in very considerable numbers from the spring onwards, in order to have enough time to repair their houses and irrigation systems before the winter planting season. If there is a trend for whole families to return rather than one or two family members, the situation could become particularly acute.

The almost total destruction of western Herat and of the districts of Enjil and Zendajan and the likely scale of the return means that very many of these returning refugees will have nowhere to live until they have rebuilt their houses.

A transit centre which UNHCR manages in Herat can accommodate up to 2,200 people. It has been used primarily for refugees on their way to the northern provinces, awaiting the provision of transport by the International Organisation for Migration. These have been processed reasonably quickly in recent months and only about 60 people were staying in the centre while we were there.

However, further supplies of tents will need to be brought in. 1,000 tents donated by Turkey have recently arrived and a further 10,000 tents are being purchased in Pakistan as a reserve for use in any emergencies which may occur within Afghanistan.

It is likely that the transit centre will continue to be used mainly for refugees travelling on to the northern provinces, who, to date, have constituted 35% of the total. It is expected that refugees returning to Herat province will manage to survive within the ruins of their houses while they rebuild them, with some protection being afforded by the plastic sheeting provided at the border under the repatriation programme. This assumes that

they return after the weather has begun to improve in the spring. If not, UNHCR will have to provide temporary accommodation in the transit centre or through additional tents.

While UNHCR will bear the main burden of providing shelter and other support to the refugees, NGOs with experience in dealing with emergencies could usefully put themselves in a position to assist, possibly taking responsibility for particular geographical areas to which refugees are returning. They could thus establish contact with returnees and provide support for house reconstruction with tools and wheat, monitoring progress at periodic intervals. They could also have a coordinating role in relation to the input of other agencies to meet specialist needs. e.g. irrigation system repair.

It is therefore recommended that NGOs with the appropriate organisational structure and experience give early consideration to playing such a role.

(iii) Additional emergency requirements

There are 24,000 blankets in store in Herat. Shoes and clothing are in great demand but there are apparently no stocks held by the UN. Supplies of second-hand shoes and clothing are, however, to be found in the market.

ICRC is maintaining a small non-food stock for emergency needs, including mattresses, blankets, pillows and socks.

(b) The rural economy

(i) Agriculture

Prewar, the area along the Hari Rud river in Herat Province was a fertile, largely irrigated valley with an abundance of staple food crops. There was also thriving horticulture and animal husbandry. In the province as a whole it was estimated that approximately 100,000 hectares was lalmi (rain fed) and 250,000 hectares was abi (irrigated). The land is described as cold, semi cold and warm.

The most important crops have been wheat, barley and rice. Cotton, fruit, vegetables, mung beans, sesame and potatoes have also been significant. Gardens were an important part of the horticulture, with grapes, of which there were 70 kinds, the most important crop, followed by apples, almonds, peaches, apricots, pomegranates, walnuts and mulberries.

14 years of war has reduced the area to one of minimal cultivation. The irrigation systems are largely destroyed or in disrepair and crops are prey to disease. Erosion is a major problem and reafforestation is needed to both reverse this process and also improve the climate.

Yields have been very poor in recent years because of a shortage

of improved seed and of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers. Wheat production in 1992 was particularly low, with bad weather aggravating the situation.

A shortage of electricity has made it necessary to suspend the early warning system for locust infestations. This used to operate by wireless between Herat, Farah, Kabul and Kandahar, but the sole generator can only now power contact between Kabul and Herat.

The Department of Agriculture has a supply of sprayers to combat locust and sunn pest infestations but will need the FAO to provide the chemical sprays.

Before the war, the Department of Agriculture was made up of ten technical and two commercial departments. Of the latter, one was concerned with agricultural machinery and the other with commercial fertilisers. The 10 technical departments were as follows: agricultural extension, plant protection, research, forestry, animal husbandry, veterinary science, cooperatives, sericulture, improved seed and planning. They employed 132 technical staff and 211 support staff.

Agricultural vocational training schools used to exist in Kabul, Helmand, Baghlan, and Herat and covered the full range of subjects through 3 year courses. The school in Herat is still operational and takes 20 students a year. There are 15-day refresher courses every year. Plant protection workers receive training through two 3-month courses, supplemented by annual refresher courses.

The Department of Agriculture is housed in a damp unheated building and is very under-resourced. It is still well staffed, however; 35 of the 42 posts in the Agricultural Extension programme, for example, are still occupied and other postholders are expected to return. The six people who used to staff the training section were said to be returning from Peshawar.

The staff are anxious to prepare for the return of the refugees by restoring the agricultural economy to prewar levels. It is vital for the future of Afghanistan that they be assisted to do so from within the Agriculture Department rather than by being employed by NGO's or the UN. Salaries are low; from 25,000 to 30,000 Afghanis a month with coupons for tea, ghee and flour. One incentive for them to remain in government service would be to give them the resources they need to get the work going again.

The opportunities for NGO's to assist in re-establishing the agricultural base to sustain a returning population are considerable. They are needed as implementers on behalf of the UN agencies and the UN agencies in their turn are needed to provide the wherewithal.

A significant gap at the time of the Mission was that of FAO. While there are plans for FAO to have a presence in Herat to cover Western Afghanistan there are urgent matters which need

attention now, especially if the expected increase in repatriation occurs in the spring.

Spraying against locust and sunn pest infestation should take place in March. The sprays therefore need to be available in good time.

The spring planting of wheat takes place from the beginning of February to half way through March. Improved seed, treated to reduce powdery mildew, and fertilisers, urea and phosphates should be made available. Flour, rather than seed, is currently being imported from Iran. Winter planting takes place from mid October to the end of November, according to the area.

It is recommended that NGOs give consideration to programme opportunities in the following areas:

* provision of improved wheat seed, fertilisers and chemicals for crop protection

* provision of an improved strain of apple trees, and of seeds to restock the nurseries

* provision of generators, fuel and vehicles, including tractors, and spare parts for them. (An NGO programme could assess machinery and spare part needs and, at a later stage an income generating maintenance programme for vehicles)

(ii) Irrigation

Most of the irrigation infrastructure has suffered from neglect, damage or destruction.

An important means of irrigation are karezes, the traditional underground tunnels which tap into the water table at the foot of mountains and extend for some kilometres. These have vertical shafts at regular intervals from which construction and maintenance is undertaken. The karezes can easily become blocked as a result of earth falling from the roof or down the shafts, thus impeding the flow of water. They therefore need frequent maintenance.

Many of the canals have been damaged by spring floods. Walls have collapsed or channels have become silted up. Intakes from rivers may require repair or reconstruction. Protection walls, flumes, syphons and diversion structures may need to be constructed.

This work needs to be undertaken on a huge scale. A list of projects identified by the Department of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation is given in the Appendix, but this is only a small sample of those which require attention.

VITA, one of the more experienced NGOs in this field, is already working in the Zendajan area. Early contact should be made with VITA to identify their likely capacity and so establish what gaps remain for other NGOs to fill.

WFP has undertaken a number of irrigation system repair projects through food for work.

It is recommended that NGOs give high priority to the repair of irrigation systems, having regard to the plans and capacity of VITA, the Department of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation and WFP.

(iii) Veterinary care

Herat province used to be a major area for animal husbandry, producing, in order of importance, sheep, goats, cows, camels, karakul sheep, horses and donkeys.

Ismail Khan identified the need to restore livestock levels as a very high priority, stating that there had been a 70% reduction in the numbers since 1979.

Such livestock as do exist are prey to disease.

There is a shortage of animal vaccines, which used to be prepared in Kabul, and also of veterinary instruments.

There are 11 vets in the Department of Agriculture, 9 of whom are qualified in animal husbandry.

Although animal stocks are low, the breeding programmes, which included the use of artificial insemination, have been suspended because the laboratories cannot operate without electricity.

It is recommended that specialist NGOs give serious consideration to the establishment of a veterinary programme in Herat, in support of the Department of Agriculture.

(c) Water supply and sanitation

The supply of water for Herat city is the immediate priority. A project already undertaken by WFP to pipe water from a natural spring in the mountains to feed the piped water system which covers part of the city will improve the situation considerably. However, WFP reports that the existing pipes are in need of repair and renewal. The reintroduction of a maintenance programme is also essential.

Much of the population is dependent on water from both shallow and tube wells. Pumps are used to extract water from the tube wells but many of these have broken down. DACAAR is now establishing an office in Herat and plans to repair the pumps and dig additional wells.

The draining of water is through open concrete channels which line the streets of the city. These should be cleaned regularly as they tend to block and overflow in times of heavy rain or flooding. They then create a health hazard because of the presence of sewage and other contaminated elements. They are also

a breeding site for mosquitos. UNICEF is seeking to tackle this problem, ideally with the assistance of an NGO, which would undertake regular cleaning and repair sections which leak.

There is no piped sewage system. We were not able to establish to what extent pit latrines or other internal w.c.s were available but it would appear that there is some use of open space. The larger houses have septic tanks.

Work is also needed in the Enjil and Zendajan areas to provide clean water through the repair and construction of wells and the provision of pumps.

It is recommended that NGOs with the necessary technical expertise consider the programme opportunities within Herat Province, having regard to the plans and capacity of the Government and of DACAAR.

(d) <u>Health</u>

(i) <u>Introduction</u>

It is clear that the infrastructure for health care delivery in Herat Province has been significantly disrupted by the events since 1979, with the major destruction of rural facilities and a shortage of every kind of resource. However, an administrative structure is in place, and though the staff are inexperienced as civil servants and they work with little financial or supervisory support, they are managing to provide a few basic services to the citizens of Herat city.

The five levels of health care, i.e.

primary care
secondary care
tertiary care
education and training
administration and logistics

all need attention in the short and medium term. It is important that whatever assistance is provided through NGOs is planned with the Government and that it is implemented with a coordinated, logical and developmental approach.

The transit of refugees in large numbers through Herat province, as repatriation from Iran gains momentum, will place a severe strain on this delicately surviving health service. The impact will depend very much on the time frame over which this happens and how much reconstruction, resupply and reorganisation can be achieved before repatriation begins in earnest in April 1993.

(ii) <u>Background</u>

Prior to 1979, government funding for Herat Province, including health care, was administered by the Zonal Chief, using funds from central government sources. He was responsible for the

overall administration of the four western provinces of Herat, Badghis, Ghor and Farah. As funds were dispersed on a "demand" basis, none of the present officials are aware of what the level of expenditure on health in Herat was before the war. The three hospitals and 14 basic health centres (BHC) that existed in the Province up until 1979 are said to have been well staffed and well funded.

At the present time, Herat is administered as a single unit with funds from Kabul. The budget for 1992 is 60 million Afghanis ($60,000) for a population of about 600,000 people. The Department of Health has a Director (who is also Director of the Provincial Hospital where he has a public and a private practice as well as administrative and teaching duties), 24 administrative staff, 284 clinical and technical staff (100 doctors and dentists, of which 12 are surgeons) and 4 vehicles. The three hospitals are functioning but only two of the 14 BHC's are operational. UNICEF plans to help re-establish the remaining BHCs by April 1993.

Salaries are very low and they are only paid very irregularly. This, combined with a minimal level of resources, means that morale is very low. The only regular source of income for most staff is private practice.

The hospital was constructed seven years ago and has 200 beds. Structurally, it is in very good condition. There are medical, surgical, paediatric and obstetric/gynaecological wards. There is also an operating suite, a laboratory with biochemistry, haematology, pathology and bacteriology services and a pharmacy. The pharmacy has almost no medicines, the operating theatres have no operating lights, the laboratory departments are all run by one man who has had no formal training and the hospital has no heating or lighting.

Surgeons are able to function in a very limited fashion but hospital physicians are seriously constrained by the shortage of drugs and because they lack the means to investigate diseases. There is no shortage of supply of drugs in the bazaar but many were date expired and most are highly inappropriate.

A medical school was established in Herat two years ago. It currently has 56 students (22 female) and plans to admit 30 students in 1993. The 12 teachers in the medical school are doctors at the provincial hospital who teach part time but who have had no training as teachers. The full-time director of the Medical School has to manage without permanent accommodation for classes, teaching aids or adequate funding.

There is also a school of medical education which has been established for many years. It is attached to the Hospital but, like the medical school, it is funded and administered by the Ministry of Education in Kabul. It offers a three year nursing course and a two year Assistant Doctor course. It has full-time teaching staff who have teaching experience, enough resources to continue functioning for the foreseeable future and its own

The report is aimed to provide NGO members of the International Consortium for Refugees in Iran with the concrete information which they require to identify programme possibilities.

IRAN

1. Introduction

The primary objective of the mission was to identify humanitarian assistance needs within Iran relating to the Afghan refugee population.

Based on information received from UNHCR and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it was decided to focus on two areas of possible need - the urban settlements on the outskirts of Mashhad and the Sistan-Baluchistan area in south-eastern Iran.

To this end, the mission spent five days in Mashhad and four days in Zahedan and Zabul.

The visit was facilitated by the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for refugee affairs, and UNHCR. These made all the necessary arrangements and often accompanied the mission team in order to make introductions, provide background information, ensure security and passage through checkpoints and translate at official meetings. We would like to record our thanks to the officers of both organisations for the considerable assistance which they extended to the mission.

The mission team spent six days in Tehran at the beginning of the visit, for discussions with BAFIA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health and UNHCR. Three days were spent there at the end of the visit for de-briefing. A meeting was also held with the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

The team also had access to documents and reports relating to conditions in the areas visited and other areas. The members of the bridgehead team are seeking additional information on the areas which the mission did not look at and may visit these areas if appropriate.

2. The general situation of Afghan refugees in Iran

The Iranian Government has perhaps been unique in the world in providing assistance to a substantial refugee population with virtually no international assistance.

The Afghan refugee population in Iran in 1989/90 was estimated to be 2,221,760. This rose to 2,942,141 by the end of 1991. Contributory factors leading to this latest wave were the renewed heavy fighting in Herat, severe flooding and consequent crop failure in many parts of Afghanistan and locust and sunn pest infestations in the northern provinces.

complex of buildings.

There has never been any training provision for medical technicians or paramedics in Herat.

Herat has also had no formal primary health care network, although elements of primary health care have been and are being carried out, but not in any coordinated or integrated fashion.

Most citizens of Herat travel to Iran for medical care and they are advised to do so by the Department of Health.

(iii) International Assistance

Because of the logistics difficulties of maintaining a project in Herat from Pakistan, there has been little international assistance for health care to western Afghanistan. UNICEF have been in Herat city for several years and are assisting the Government with projects in water and sanitation, nutrition, EPI, reconstruction of buildings, heating and lighting for the provincial hospital, repair and re-equipping of the X-ray department and supply of medicines. UNICEF have funds available for an emergency assistance plan up to April 1993 but are in need of implementing partners. WHO plan to have an office in Herat and did promise some assistance to the laboratory services at the provincial hospital, although this was some time ago.

During our mission, Medecins du Monde was in Herat establishing a team of five French health staff (including a male gynaecologist) at the Provincial hospital. MDM plan to staff and supply hospitals in Herat and Ghor. DACAAR were also there looking at water supply projects.

Handicap Internationale (HI) have a small workshop at Zendajan, but this was not functioning at the time of the visit due to HI being unable to maintain logistics support. According to government and UN officials, none of the other health projects listed in the ACBAR database for Herat have been contacted, if indeed they exist at all.

(iv) Proposed Solutions

For 1993, a strategy is proposed that will provide both for the needs of the transiting refugees and develop the health care infrastructure of Herat Province. In order to implement this strategy, a minimum of four NGOs would be needed and the year would be divided into two phases, each of six months.

The objectives of this strategy would be to:

* re-establish the basic infrastructure

* protect that infrastructure from overload during repatriation by providing separate facilities for transiting refugees

* develop health care systems

* reduce the need for Afghans to travel to Iran for health care

* help to stimulate the local economy through construction, employment and purchasing activities

In the first six months, emphasis should be placed on addressing immediate needs which are:

* repair or replacement of all damaged basic health centres in all districts and sub-districts. It is not yet clear which of the 14 district BHCs will need repairs only and which will need to be completely rebuilt.

* construction or repair of at least 5 BHCs in Herat city

* staffing and re-equipping of the 3 city hospitals, the urban primary health network and the rural primary health care network.

* refresher training of existing staff

* provision of emergency health care to transiting refugees at specific locations

There is work for one NGO in the rural areas, one for urban primary health care, at least one for support of the three referral hospitals in the city and one for emergency needs of transiting refugees. Government resources, such as they are, can easily cover continued payment of salaries to its existing staff if NGOs are able to contribute to capital costs and supply of expendable property. Projects should not establish terms and conditions for staff that the government cannot also fulfil.

Transiting refugees will enter Herat at Islam Qala and most will travel to Herat city to spend at least one night before proceeding on their onward journey the next day. If no health post is established by the Iranian Government at the border transit camps in Iran, a health facility will be needed at the border on the Afghan side. If Iran does provide health facilities, the border post health care on the Afghan side need only be very basic.

Most transiting refugees will spend the night at the UNHCR transit guest house in Herat city. In order to avoid overburdening of the existing health system, it is recommended that an NGO set up a health post in the guest house to provide basic care, vaccinations and to screen referrals to the city hospitals so that time and resources are not wasted by large numbers of self-referrals. The same NGO could operate any post needed at the border.

Once this network is in place, the main problem for the second six months of 1993 will be that of volume of resources needed and

their strategic location to cope with returnees and transiting refugees. If the network is in place and there is a good system of coordination between NGOs, Government and the UN, the second phase should be relatively easy to administer. During this phase, planning for the mid and long term can be carried out.

It is vital for the future development of the province that government officials take a leading role in policy making, planning and implementation. Therefore a committee should be established consisting of Government, NGO and UN representatives, who will agree policy and implementing procedures. Care should also be taken to incorporate national planning needs into local plans.

Initially, finding suitably qualified staff for NGO offices and projects will be a major constraint. Most refugees from this area went to Iran and Iran has had no training programmes for Afghans as has been the case in Pakistan. However, the standard of education in Herat and therefore of refugees in Iran has traditionally been high and it may be expected that a cadre of good quality staff can be developed in a relatively short time, particularly if the lessons learned in Pakistan are heeded.

As UNICEF is the only United Nations agency working in health in Herat at the present time, they should play a key role in the development of provincial services. Their expertise should be used to:

* help set policy and work practices

* promote and facilitate refresher training

* provide educational materials

* procure resources nationally and internationally

* help re-establish the Government's logistics network through providing vehicles, trucks, warehouses, cold chain materials, design and printing of standard forms and establishment of standardised procurement procedures. If WHO do set up an office in Herat, they might be able to assist in this role.

Little can be done in the way of construction until spring but NGOs interested in working in Herat can use the time up till spring to visit the area. Those who wish to make a commitment can then set about writing detailed project proposals and approaching the relevant authorities for project approval and funding.

(e) Education

There has been considerable destruction of school buildings. Many of those that remain are in need of substantial repair. Most of the schools are said to have no desks or chairs. There is also a shortage of teaching materials and stationary. The textbooks

produced by the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in conjunction with the previous Afghan Interim Government in Peshawar, are used up to the sixth grade. There are very few textbooks for the secondary school level.

It is recommended that NGOs with experience in the education sector consider how they might best meet the above needs.

(f) Roads, bridges and construction

Most of the roads require repair. The main Islam Qala-Herat road, for example, is badly potholed. Roads are dusty in the summer and muddy during the winter rains. Many bridges are in danger of collapsing and some are at risk from the spring floods. Herat city has largely dirt roads.

Public buildings, such as clinics, schools, power sub-stations and administrative buildings are also likely to need major work.

UNDP is currently considering whether it can assist with road repair.

It is recommended that NGOs with the capacity and skills to undertake construction work give serious consideration to the establishment of a programme in western Afghanistan.

7. UN programmes

a) UNHCR

UNHCR Herat links with UNHCR in Mashhad to facilitate the orderly and voluntary repatriation of refugees from Iran. Weekly meetings are held at the Islam Qala border crossing between staff from the two offices, together with IOM.

We were advised that at least two thirds of those crossing the border have been migrant workers going back and forth. Using the definition of a returning refugee as someone who declares that he intends to stay in Afghanistan for more than a year, UNHCR reported that about 33,000 had crossed during 1992. Most of these had come to Afghanistan since the change of Government in April.

About 60% of the refugees indicated that they were returning to Herat. Of these, most were going to Herat city, Enjil and Zendajan.

The remaining 40% were travelling to the northern provinces of Badghis, Faryab, Jozjan, Balkh, Kunduz, Baghlan and Ghor or to the border provinces of Farah and Nimruz, using border crossings from Iran directly into these latter provinces.

Those returning to Hazarajat were also using the northern route, because it was no longer considered safe for non-Pushtoons to travel through the southern provinces. Many of the Hazaras had

left Afghanistan the previous winter because of severe food shortages, and few felt ready to return yet.

UNHCR assists returning refugees to rebuild their homes by providing tools and a supply of wheat. It focuses mainly on the rural areas in order to encourage people to return to their villages and remain there. The main operational areas are Enjil and Zendajan, which previously supplied most of the food for Herat province. The present programme envisages the provision of the assistance package to 5,200 families before easter.

The 1993 programme provides for the building of 24,000 shelters to be supported in four provinces, of which 400 would be in Badghis. However, the programme could be expanded if additional resources were found. It is estimated that it takes 50 person days to construct a mud dwelling of 5 X 3 square metres.

There is some discussion about whether concrete lintels should be provided to refugees in order to minimise the cutting down of trees.

UNHCR has also attempted a vulnerable group feeding programme, using a Government department called the Shura of Implementation to operate the programme. Families are provided with tools and food. About 500 people have been assisted. UNHCR regards this as a difficult project to operate because of the considerable monitoring requirement. They would welcome an NGO taking it on.

(b) WFP

The WFP estimate for the food deficit for Afghanistan is around 600,000 metric tonnes of wheat. WFP can only meet about 45% of the deficit, which it is doing primarily through programmes aimed at refugees and displaced people. It considers that early priority should be given to the restoration of the agricultural base.

The WFP-programme can be categorised under three headings:
1) Relief needs, 2) Emergency rehabilitation needs 3)Rehabilitation needs, leading to development.

The major relief programme has been the dispatch of 1,116 MT of wheat and 59 MT of sugar to Ghor, enough for 2 months. WFP plans a month-long mission to Ghor in the summer of 1993.

WFP is also launching a bakery project in Herat which is intended to bring the price of bread down from 40 Afghanis to 15 Afghanis per 500 grammes. The provision of food for UNHCR's vulnerable group feeding programme also comes under the relief category.

Emergency rehabilitation programmes have included food for work programmes such as UNHCR's support package for returning refugees while they rebuild their houses. The clearing of karezes and canals through food for work has been another major programme area. Food for work was also used for the water project for Herat city referred to above. WFP has clearly achieved a great deal

within a very short time, but is much in need of implementing partners to tackle the major task of restoring the irrigation system to facilitate the resettlement of returning refugees. Some roads could be repaired through food for work programmes.

WFP is not yet in a position to tackle non-emergency rehabilitation needs on any scale, but there are a number of small food for work projects, such as the repair of the doctor's house for the Zendajan hospital and the funding of a small team to maintain the Herat mosque.

One of the WFP projects includes the monetisation of 6,000 MT of wheat to fund the Government to undertake major rehabilitation projects in 1993.

(c) UNICEF

UNICEF in Herat has adopted a broad interpretation of its remit to tackle health problems in order to meet emergency needs. The following programmes or projects have been undertaken:

a) Extended Programme of Immunisation
b) Strengthening the management of Herat General Hospital
c) Rehabilitation of Basic Health Units. Five out of twelve have been re-opened. There is a particular focus on Zendajan.
d) Supply of drugs to the hospital and BHUs
e) Organisation of refresher courses for health workers, including vaccinators
f) Provision of emergency high-protein food to Ghor
g) Digging of wells
h) Improvement of water and sanitation
i) Removal of solid waste
j) Repair of school buildings and provision of supplies other than textbooks

Among the projects which it would like NGOs to undertake are the following:

a) Construction of latrines
b) Drop-in centres for street children
c) Water and sanitation
d) Social mobilisation

UNICEF has brought in supplies via the ex-Soviet Union to date but is actively exploring the possibility of procuring them in or through Iran.

(d) UNOCHA

UNOCHA has had a presence in Herat, on and off, since 1989. Initially, it took responsibility for the implementation of projects through temporary inter-agency teams know as Salam Mobile Units. Its primary role has been to provide support to agencies during the early stages of setting up programmes. To this end, it has negotiated with the Government and local structures, liaised with other agencies and provided office

space, logistical support, vehicles etc. It has also had responsibility for security when the UN has moved into new area. UNOCHA has organised missions to areas where agencies are not working.

In the Herat area it has negotiated agreement with the various political parties present not to attack or jeopardise UN operations.

In addition, UNOCHA acts as the lead agency for the programmes relating to mine clearance, surveying and awareness training. It works through the Organisation for Mine Awareness in Herat which has three mine-clearance teams of 32 people each. These have been concentrating on the clearance of three security belts to the west of Herat and are nearing the completion of the first of these. They have also been working in the Enjil and Zendajan areas and plan to complete the clearance within six months.

(e) FAO

FAO is not currently represented in Herat. However, there are plans to post an officer to deal with the sunn pest and locust programme and another to oversee the provision of improved seed. Both officers need to be in post before the spring planting.

8. NGO programmes

Western Afghanistan has been poorly served by NGOs over the fourteen years of war, largely because of the difficulties NGOs have had in gaining access to the area from their bases in Pakistan. Poor security within the area and on the access routes has further deterred NGOs.

With the improvement in security since October 1992, a number of NGOs are already exploring the possibility of setting up programmes.

DACAAR was in the process of establishing an office at the time of our visit and is planning to focus initially on the digging of tube wells to supply schools, hospitals and other public buildings with water. It also plans to repair irrigation systems, undertake construction projects, improve existing wells and water tanks, repair and renew water pumps, repair roads and manufacture concrete lintels for house building and concrete poles to facilitate the re-electrification of Herat.

Medecins du Monde brought in a medical team while we were there and a sanitation engineer was about to arrive. A supply of drugs and equipment were flown in during the same week. MDM is concentrating on the provision of support to the hospitals in Herat and Chaghcharan.

VITA is already working on the repair of irrigation systems, bridges and roads in Zendajan and Ghoryan. It has also tackled a major river diversion project on the road to Zendajan.

Medecins Sans Frontieres has undertaken a survey and was planning to send two doctors.

The International Assistance Mission were said to be considering the establishment of an eye hospital in Herat.

Handicap Internationale has had a programme in the area for some time.

The German Afghanistan Foundation provided seven tractors/combine harvesters in 1992, and also gave some assistance with sericulture.

A recently established indigenous NGO, by the name of Ansari, had distributed a small quantity of improved wheat seed and fertiliser provided by FAO, for demonstration and multiplication purposes. This had been distributed to farmers in Zendajan and Gozarah.

The view was expressed by UN agencies that, in addition to the need for NGOs to provide technical back-up to the Government's specialist staff, NGOs should concentrate on providing good administrators.

At a meeting with UN agencies in Herat, the following possible programme areas for NGOs were proposed, without identifying any order of priority:

a) education
b) urban planning, including the planning of a comprehensive sanitation system
c) integrated agricultural extension work
d) animal husbandry
e) horticulture
f) irrigation system repair
g) provision of winter clothing and blankets
h) technical assistance for the restoration of vineyards
i) silkworm projects
j) seed programmes
k) provision of urban and rural primary health care networks
l) veterinary care
m) repair or roads, bridges, schools, hospitals etc.
n) repair/construction of intakes and diversion structures for the purpose of flood control

9. ICRC

ICRC is in the process of setting up an orthopaedic centre in Herat. It plans to produce about 80 prostheses a month.

It has also provided some drugs to the main hospital. Some supplies have been brought in from the north, through Turkmenistan and Torghundi.

10. Iranian Red Crescent Society

The Iranian Red Crescent Society, working in conjunction with the Afghan Red Crescent Society, has established a clinic in Herat and plans to provide some assistance to one of the hospitals. It has an effective emergency unit and is therefore in a good position to respond to any emergencies which may arise.

11. International Organisation for Migration

IOM provides transport for refugees transiting through Herat en route for the northern provinces. Buses or trucks take refugees from Islam Qala to Herat. Onward transport to the provinces of Badghis, Faryab, Jozjan and Balkh has to date been in the form of lorries. However, it is hoped that some means can be found of refugees travelling by air because of the very poor road conditions.

12. Logistics and communications

UN and NGO staff are able to travel on the UNOCHA plane, known as Salam 01, to and from Pakistan, and between Herat and Mashhad. However, this is already used to capacity and there may be a need for the leasing of a new plane to be funded in order to ensure that personnel can travel when they want or need to.

UNOCHA has a new plane available for the transport of supplies. The plane has a capacity of 5 metric tonnes. Additional funding is needed from donors to maintain the financing of this.

There are passenger flights between Mashhad and Quetta every Sunday on PIA.

The bazaar in Herat is reasonably well stocked with many of the items which NGOs will require for their operations. The UN is an important source of supplies such as food, tents, blankets, drugs, seeds and pesticides.

For additional supplies, it is worth exploring in the first instance whether these can be obtained easily in Iran. UN agencies in both Herat and Iran and the ICRI team can provide information on this.

The World Food Programme can advise on the transportation of supplies from Europe to Torghundi through the ex-Soviet Union. It recommends that a Through Bill of Lading be organised through Morflot, the shipping agent for the ex-Soviet Union. It will take responsibility for boat and rail transport to Kushgar on the Turkmenistan side of the border and will deal with any documentation required by the government authorities on the transit route. A charge will be made for the through transport. Prices are normally competitive. The WFP official to contact is Mr Ohlsen on 010-396-5797-6042.

It is also relatively easy to purchase supplies in Uzbekistan. Dolph Everts of UNHCR has looked into this in some depth in relation to tents and blankets. Visas for Uzbekistan can be obtained in Mazar.

There are cargo airlines based in the Gulf, which can be chartered. It is thus possible that they will agree to fly direct from Dubai to Herat. Some companies may be willing to provide this service free on humanitarian grounds.

In the event that emergency supplies need to be flown in, Shindand airport will take a Boeing 707 and Herat airport will take a Hercules.

There are two banks in Herat but neither of them is able to handle the size of transactions which NGOs and UN agencies require. However, this situation may improve. One method of transferring money is through traders. Money may thus be given to a trader in Pakistan and he will arrange for a relative or contact to provide the money in Herat. However, this system may not work for very large sums.

Telephone contact with the outside world is limited to the satellite phone. There is a telephone system within Herat but not all the UN offices have the use of this.

Fuel is in short supply in western Afghanistan. UNICEF has recently procured some from Iran for generators and transport used in the provision of health care.

13. Working conditions

The present UN staffing level is only a skeleton one, and the working conditions reflect this. UN staff have lived together in one house up to now for security reasons, and this has meant a loss of personal space. Their have also pushed themselves to their limits to meet emergency and reconstruction requirements, with the ever present possibility of fighting breaking out again. The presence of mines and the political uncertainty have created their own tensions.

NGO's coming in would face similar conditions if security remained uncertain. Ideally, there should be more personal living space than UN staff currently enjoy, but Herat is a relatively small city with an increasing population and it is not clear at present what potential there is for NGO's to find accommodation. The limited availability of the UN plane and the difficulties obtaining visas for Iran and Turkmenistan mean that staff cannot be sure of being able to leave when they want or need to. This problem could increase as new NGO's come in. There may be a case for Herat-based staff to have short rest and recreation breaks in Pakistan, in addition to their annual leave, because of the strains of living there.

However, the stresses could be considerably reduced if the

92% of the Afghan refugee population are living within pre-existing towns and villages throughout Iran, often settling on the outskirts of urban centres.

The remaining 8% of the population live in spontaneous settlements, most of which are in Khorasan. Just over half the refugees are in the two border provinces of Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchistan.

The refugees are provided with basic health, education, water and electricity services which are generally of a reasonable standard, together with food coupons. In principle, they have the same facilities as the indigenous population. However, the distance of some refugee concentrations from certain health and education facilities means that they have perhaps less access than Iranians. The poor socio-economic status of the refugees is also a determining factor in the use made of services.

The refugee population has clearly put a considerable strain on the resources of the central and local government and there have been social consequences.

The Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior is the Government department responsible for all aspects of the refugee presence. It liaises with other Ministries such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health, where appropriate.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society has a role in dealing with emergency situations arising from the refugee presence and has also responded to emergencies in Afghanistan.

The appropriate Government Ministries and the Iranian Red Crescent Society are represented on two committees which BAFIA chairs - the Permanent Committee of Refugees and the Coordination Council of Refugees. These Committees determine the terms for cooperation between the Government of Iran and NGOs.

3. The refugee situation in the border provinces

(a) Khorasan

The province extends from the Turkmenistan border in the north to Sistan-Baluchistan in the south and thus covers most of the border area between Iran and Afghanistan. It has direct access to the provinces of Herat and Farah, from which a large proportion of the refugees are thought to originate. It is also the province from which refugees travelling to the northern and central provinces of Afghanistan would cross the border.

The Afghan refugee population of Khorasan province numbers 1,252,144. Of these, about 450,000 are reported to live in Mashhad. A further 180,000 live in the Birjand, Qaen and Nehbandan districts along the Afghan border to the south of Mashhad. 145,000 of these have built their own settlements. The

security situation continues to improve, if the workload becomes more manageable, and if access to the area becomes easier.

It should also be emphasised that, for those with an interest in the history and traditions of the region, Herat has much to offer.

14. Information/Coordination needs

Since there has been virtually no NGO or UN involvement in Western Afghanistan since the early years of the war and the hope and likelihood is that it will now increase, there is an excellent opportunity to put into practise the lessons learned in previous collaborations such as that in Khost with the Paktika Task Force.

The UN staff are overstretched at present and will be unable to service incoming staff and organisations with information or coordinate activities. They have made valiant efforts to do so up to now but their time and resources are limited. It is therefore proposed that a two person team should operate from Herat, initially for 6 months, and set up an office providing facilities such as a satellite telephone/fax, (currently priced at approx $40,000) and photocopier.

There are clear needs for such a team now as it becomes possible for agencies to move in. Initially there is a need for a diagrammatic map of Herat showing essential offices. There is also an urgent need for an information handout, with a map, about the known location of mines around Herat City and province as well as safety instructions. These will both need regular updating and would form part of an information bank.

The information bank would contain details of existing and planned UN and NGO programmes and all available reports on the area, by aid workers and anthropologists, together with mission assessments, evaluations and technical maps, such as those showing water supply systems.

The functions of the team, apart from setting up the information bank, and servicing incoming agencies with information and advice would involve collaborating with the provincial authorities from the beginning, receiving delegations of Afghans, donors and others. A primary function would be to gather and disseminate information about programme possibilities.

The team could also assist in setting appropriate guidelines for work eg salary levels.

Funding of these posts could be shared by the UN and NGO's.

It is also proposed that a coordination committee be established at which information could be shared between the various involved parties. It should thus include representatives of the Government, UN agencies and NGOs. The committee could be serviced

by the information team.

15. Summary of findings

There are needs in all sectors relating to the reconstruction of western Afghanistan. The UN is not likely to be able to meet these without assistance. There is therefore considerable scope for NGOs to make a contribution. This, in our view, should be done in support of the Governmental infrastructure which exists in Herat.

It does not appear that there is a need for NGOs to meet emergency requirements over the coming winter as these are being adequately covered by the UN agencies.

However, if there is a large scale return of refugees from Iran over the winter, there will be a need for the international community, both donor governments and NGOs, to respond to meet food and shelter needs. It is considered that the emergency units of donor government and NGOs should be alerted now to this possibility so that they can be in a necessary state of preparedness. Additional personnel would also be needed to assist with the processing of this aid. The consequences of a large-scale return would also need to be looked at by agencies operating in the northern provinces.

Refugees should be alerted to the existence of mines within the destroyed area of Herat and possible presence of isolated and scattered mines elsewhere and be provided with the necessary information to enable them to identify these. There is a need for a central point of information on security and mines that NGOs can use.

Because of the magnitude of the reconstruction task, there is an urgent need for a staffed coordination structure to be set up in order to ensure that resources are used as effectively as possible, that duplication is avoided, that provision is standardised and that realistic information is given as to the potential contribution of international agencies so as to minimise undue expectations.

If the political situation remains secure, there is every possibility to reinstate a thriving and successful rural economy in Herat province.

However, the development needs of Ghor need to be addressed urgently in order to tackle what is endemic poverty on a serious scale.

It may be that the forthcoming UN mission to Badghis will also identify a potential role for NGOs.

Consideration of programming opportunities in Farah will have to await the organisation of a separate aid mission, possibly from Iran.

The absence of an FAO representative in Herat will seriously impede the process of restoring the agricultural base. Priority should be given to the securing of funds for this purpose. The successful FAO/NGO partnership in Pakistan is a good example to follow.

It is also important to clarify which agency, whether UN or NGO, will tackle the major task of road repair.

Once the more immediate emergency and reconstruction needs have been met, there may be opportunities for NGOs to facilitate sericulture and the restoration of orchards and vineyards.

largest of these spontaneous settlements are at Shamsabad, near Birjand, with 36,164 people and Ahangaran, near Qaen, with 30,000.

The refugees represent 22.8% of the total population of Khorasan province and 31% of the population of Mashhad. In Torbat-e-Jam, on the road from Mashhad to the Dogharun border crossing, 77% of the population are refugees. Khorasan has the largest Afghan refugee population of the Iranian provinces.

The standard of services provided is, in most areas, reasonable but the attendance of Afghan children at middle and secondary schools is very low.

The presence of the shrine of Imam Reza makes Mashhad an important Shi'a centre. It has therefore attracted many of the Shi'a refugees from Afghanistan, particularly the Hazaras.

(b) Sistan-Baluchistan

Sistan-Baluchistan is one of the more economically deprived areas of Iran. It therefore faces greater problems than most other provinces but it has relatively fewer resources to deal with them. Among its major difficulties is a total dependence of the city of Zahedan on a brackish water supply and the proneness of the Zabul area of Sistan to heavy flooding from the Helmand river.

The north of the province borders on Nimroz in southern Afghanistan. The rest, namely the Baluchistan area, extends the full length of the Pakistan border to the Gulf of Oman.

The city of Zahedan has a key position near the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan and is therefore an important trading centre.

The refugee situation in Sistan-Baluchistan is complex. Historically, there has been considerable movement between Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan to engage in trade. Afghans have traditionally moved to Iran during the winter months to find work, returning in the summer to cultivate their land. The predominance of the Baluch in this border area within all three countries means that there is also cultural homogeneity. Inter-marriage further complicates the picture.

However, there has clearly been an unusually large influx of people since the beginning of the war in Afghanistan.

Sistan-Baluchistan is recorded as having an Afghan refugee population of 270,323. This represents 22% of the total population of the province. Zahedan has a particularly high concentration of Afghans.

About half the refugees are reported to originate from the provinces of Farah, Nimruz and Helmand. We were only able to identify one community as having a clear origin. This was the

spontaneous settlement at Niatak near Zabul, where a refugee representative indicated that they were from Farah.

The refugees tend to represent the poorest sector of a relatively impoverished population. This manifests itself in overcrowding, poor health status, an extremely low school attendance rate and the presence of large numbers of children earning money on the streets.

A number of Iranian villages were said to have become predominantly Afghan.

4. Repatriation

(a) The prospects

The prospects for repatriation clearly relate to the situation in the areas of origin. The growing stability in Herat province makes it possible for refugees to contemplate returning there. However, because of the high level of destruction in Herat and the virtual collapse of the infrastructure, it is important that refugees return at a reasonable rate so as not to put too great a strain on the resources available in the area. It may be expected that the pattern of return which has been established from Pakistan will apply.

Refugees in Pakistan have tended to send some family members in advance to work on the reconstruction of houses, the restoration of irrigation systems and the re-cultivation of the land, while leaving the rest of the family in Pakistan. This has normally been a two to three year process.

It may therefore be expected that many young men will return to the Herat area in the spring in order to undertake the necessary reconstruction work.

It is hoped that FAO will have a presence by then so that it can provide improved seed, pesticides and herbicides in order to maximise yields from the winter planting. If this is successful and the spring 1994 crop is a good one, it may be that families will begin to return in large numbers from the summer of 1994 onwards. This assumes that the security situation remains reasonable.

The return to Farah and Nimroz from Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchistan may be later than that to Herat. However, the mission were not able to obtain sufficient information on the area to make an assessment. The authorities in Sistan-Baluchistan were not expecting an early return of refugees from the province.

However, those in Khorasan appeared to consider that refugees should begin to return in large numbers in 1993. This is, in part, a response to the improved security situation in Herat and, in part, to the social consequences of the refugee presence in Mashhad.

There are thus pressures for the refugees to return sooner rather than later and these could affect the voluntary nature of the return if all the parties involved do not take considerable care to maintain control of the process. However, it should be emphasised that the Government of Iran has stated that it is committed to a voluntary and dignified return for the refugees.

(b) <u>The process</u>

On 1st December 1992, UNHCR and the Government of Iran commenced a repatriation programme in accordance with a recent Tripartite Agreement between the Governments of Iran and Afghanistan and UNHCR. Under this programme, refugees present themselves with their registration documents at the local office of the Ministry of the Interior where they are given a laisser-passer entitling them to cross the border within seven days. They then take this to a designated border crossing where they receive rials to the value of $25 in cash and 50 kg of wheat per head and a large piece of plastic sheeting per family. To date, only one border crossing has been established for this purpose, at Dogharun, on the road from Mashhad to Herat. During the first month of the programme, 6,926 individuals had benefited from the assistance package. Most were said to be refugees who had begun to prepare for their return some months previously.

So far, there is no sign that refugees are responding hastily to the introduction of the repatriation programme. It is hoped that refugees will not feel under pressure to return before the spring, as, clearly, they would be potentially at risk if they returned over the winter months.

Additional designated border crossings are being established in Sistan-Baluchistan, at Milak, on the Helmand river between Zabul and Zaranj, and at Mirjaveh on the Pakistan border. Three further crossings are planned, one of which will be from the Birjand area into Farah Province.

The use of the Mirjaveh crossing point will have to await the agreement of the Pakistan Government to the repatriation programme. At present, it is not willing to process refugees through Pakistan en route for Afghanistan.

Each border crossing consists of a large walled compound with offices and storage areas at which the documentation of the refugees is checked and the cash, wheat and plastic sheeting is handed over. They also contain health facilities and accommodation for refugees needing to stay overnight.

There is more work to be done to prepare the crossing points to receive refugees in large numbers. At Milak there is a need to provide some safe means of crossing the Helmand River.
Hardship to returning refugees would be reduced if there was also accommodation provided on the Afghanistan side of the border. Refugees sometimes arrive in Afghanistan late in the afternoon and cannot then get onward transport. The greater the numbers that cross, the greater the possibility that the processing of

refugees will be lengthy and that overnight accommodation will be required.

The question of transport for refugees to the border from the various parts of Iran, some at a very considerable distance, is one which both BAFIA and UNHCR/International Organisation for Migration have been considering. Because of the high cost of hiring private transport, particularly taking into account the large amount of luggage which most families have, BAFIA and UNHCR are proposing that free transport be provided for the refugees. The International Organisation for Migration will take responsibility for the organisation of the transport, on similar lines to its programme within Afghanistan.

BAFIA and UNHCR have agreed to establish four transit centres to provide overnight accommodation for those travelling long distances. The two organisations will share responsibility for the running of these transit centres.

Both the Government and UNHCR have indicated that they would welcome NGO assistance in the provision of health services at the transit centres and crossing points.

An appropriate level of medical staffing for each transit centre and border station would be two nurses. These would provide first aid, treat simple diseases and check for malaria and T.B. Those returning refugees who are found to have malaria or T.B. should be referred back to the nearest health centre for treatment.

Ideally, refugees who intend to return should be encouraged to have health checks before applying for their travel documents.

5. Needs Assessment

(a) Health

It is clear that the influx of 2.9 million refugees into Iran from Afghanistan since 1979 has placed a considerable burden on the health care system of Iran. In fact, it is widely believed that this influx is responsible for the resurgence of previously controlled diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria.

In 1992, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran expects to spend about $50,000,000 on providing health care to Afghans. As 90% of Afghans share health facilities with Iranians, this figure is only an estimate, but it represents a considerable proportion of the total health budget.

The primary health care service in Iran includes immunisation, promotion of breastfeeding, growth monitoring, prenatal and post-natal care, health education, environmental health activities, water and sanitation, micro-nutrient deficiencies including iron and iodine deficiences, endemic diseases including malaria and finally basic curative health services. Improvements have the service have contributed to the reduction of the infant mortality

rate from over 120 in 1980 to less than 40 in 1991.

The province of Khorasan has an effective primary health care system which is preventive in approach.

Most of UNHCR's assistance programmes for the province are in the south, particulary in the spontaneous settlements near Qaen and Birjand, and the 1993 plan is to increase this level of assistance, through the provision of additional health centres to the spontaneous settlements near Nehbandan. UNHCR expects to spend about $3,600,000 in 1993. 50% of this allocation will be spent in Khorasan and the remaining 50% will be divided equally between Sistan-Baluchistan and Kerman provinces.

The 700,000 Afghan refugees in Khorasan have good access to health care. This is confirmed by the high levels of EPI coverage and the large improvement in health indicators since the first surveys were done in 1988. The greater dispersal of the refugee settlements in south Khorasan means that there is less coverage provided by the health infrastructure and access is therefore less good. Nevertheless, health indicators for south Khorasan are showing good improvements.

The advice of Ministry of Health officials in Tehran and Mashhad was that NGOs would help Khorasan most by providing the Government with resources such as vehicles, medicines and technical equipment, and by implementing effective projects across the border in Afghanistan. Both officials recommended that NGOs which wished to implement their own projects should first look at Sistan-Baluchistan.

Sistan-Baluchistan has always been a poor province, with a harsh climate. Health indicators are not known in detail but are thought to be the worst in Iran. Malaria is a major problem and tuberculosis is not being controlled. Because it is a remote and desolate area with certain risks to personal comfort and security, few Iranians are willing to work there. 95% of the doctors in the remoter areas of the province are non-Iranian. Literacy levels are low and this affects the calibre of local staff.

Our visit to Zahedan and Zabul confirmed the harshness of the living conditions and the opinion of Ministry of Health officials that the health service is largely emergency in nature - all resources are used to unsuccessfully meet curative demands, with nothing left for preventative or development work. The administrative structure is clearly overstretched and the staff we met in various facilities had not been able to keep sufficiently abreast of new developments through refresher training etc. Attempts by NGOs to implement health projects in cooperation with the Ministry of Health would need to be carefully evaluated to avoid causing further strain to the fragile structure. It is beyond the capacity of the current administration to absorb any projects started by NGOs, especially projects related to the training of more staff or to the development of primary health care networks, using community

health workers.

The major cause of morbidity in the region is water-related diseases. Zahedan is situated in an area of desert. There is not an adequate supply of water to meet the basic requirement of all residents and the water available is of poor quality. Sistan is a flood-prone area, being marshy and of low elevation. Projects proposed for water and sanitation improvement will have an immediate and positive effect on the health of the population.

Although no figures are available, many sources reported a large number of physically disabled adults and children in the area. There is, at present, no service for providing artificial limbs and physiotherapy services are only available in district hospitals. Polio and mine injuries to Afghans account for most of this disability. The Red Crescent plans to start a centre in the near future with a capacity of 3,000 patients per year.

The primary health care network is limited to large towns and suffers from a lack of resources, poor supervision and irregular refresher/in-service training. Female staff are particularly hard to find, to staff those health centres which are in place.

Meetings are currently being held between UNHCR and WHO to discuss the health component of the repatriation process. However, neither have funds specifically available for health care to refugees in transit to the border and both would like NGOs to become involved, if only in providing resources and staff, especially female staff, to the four transit centres and six exit stations.

General recommendations:

(i) There is an immediate need to establish water and sanitation projects in Zahedan and Zabul within Sistan-Baluchistan. These will have an immediate effect on the health of individuals and reduce the demands on the resources of the Ministry of Health. Money saved could be diverted to other areas such as primary health care.

(ii) There is a long-term need to improve the effectiveness of the primary health care network in urban and rural areas. However, the Ministry of Health cannot support this at the moment. Therefore, special priority should be given to refresher courses and training in management skills to MOH clinical staff. These should be provided through in-service training and workshops. They would be aimed to improve team work practice, coordinate the activities of the various services and minimise the wastage of vital resources.

It is again emphasised that programmes injecting more staff and resources into the existing system will be unsuccessful. It is important to ensure that the administrative capacity is expanded in proportion to any increase in medical services.

(iii) The normal practice elsewhere in the world of engaging

maintain themselves in a state of preparedness to meet any emergency situation which may arise.

There is presently the necessary political stability and security for NGOs to operate programmes in Herat and the Government infrastructure remains sufficiently intact for NGOs to build on it in seeking to meet humanitarian needs. UNOCHA expects to have completed the clearance of mines in the Enjil and Zendajan areas by the middle of 1993 and is making good progress in clearing those to the west of Herat.

The UN agencies currently present are UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and UNOCHA. FAO is expected to send a specialist soon to oversee the locust and sunn pest programme and another officer to oversee the provision of improved seed. The FAO presence will hopefully ensure that yields can be increased sufficiently to support the returning refugees after the first year or two.

Some NGOs have already commenced programmes in Herat, notably VITA, Handicap Internationale, DACAAR, Medecins du Monde, German Afghanistan Foundation and Ansari.

ICRC is setting up an orthopaedic centre and plans to produce prostheses.

There is scope for an NGO with a development brief to undertake a long-term programme in Ghor, where the poor growing conditions have led to periodic famines.

Herat is likely to be a transit point for refugees returning from Iran to the northern provinces of Afghanistan. The International Organisation for Migration is providing onward transport for these refugees and they are being offered temporary accommodation by UNHCR in Herat while they wait for their transport. An NGO could usefully assist in providing health care at the transit centre in order to protect the existing health service from overload.

NGOs have access to the UNOCHA plane to transport personnel between Herat and both Iran and Pakistan. Many supplies are available in the market and others can be obtained reasonably easily from Iran, Uzbekistan or from Europe, using the overland route through the ex-Soviet Union. Emergency supplies can be flown in to Herat or Shindand airport. Telephone contact is only possible through the satellite phone. Fuel is in short supply. It is difficult to transfer money to Herat but ways are being actively sought of getting around this problem.

Poor security in the past has made working conditions difficult for staff. NGOs will need to monitor these carefully and may need to consider short rest and recreation breaks as part of employee contracts.

With the expected influx of refugees in large numbers and of NGOs, it is essential that an information/coordination structure be established as soon as possible to ensure the effectiveness of agency operations and to involve the Government in the planning and implementation of programmes.

between Zahedan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, together with ethnic and cultural homogeneity, the determination of who is a refugee is particularly complex.

It may be expected that refugees will return from northern Khorasan to Afghanistan in large numbers from the spring, in part because of the growing stability in Herat and northern Afghanistan and, in part, due to the social consequences of the refugee presence which are creating some pressure for them to return. It is hoped that the commitment of the Iranian Government to the voluntary and dignified return of the refugees will not be undermined by this pressure.

However, the authorities in Sistan-Baluchistan are not expecting an early return from there.

A repatriation programme commenced on 1st December 1992, following the signing of a tripartite agreement between Iran, Afghanistan and UNHCR. Registered refugees are provided with a package of cash, wheat and plastic sheeting. Temporary accommodation is provided at border crossings and at transit centres en route from distant parts of Iran to the border. The International Organisation for Migration will provide free transport to the border. Both the Government and UNHCR would welcome NGO assistance in the administration of this programme, including a possible health care component.

The provision of health care in Khorasan is of a reasonably high standard and there have been improvements in health indicators.

Sistan-Baluchistan faces greater health problems and does not have the capacity to deal with them effectively. NGO programmes aimed to improve access to safe water will have the most immediate impact. NGOs could also usefully provide some training to health service staff. Key officials could be invited to visit NGO programmes in Pakistan in order to increase their understanding of NGO activities.

Zahedan has a brackish water supply which, combined with contamination caused by overcrowding and poor hygiene, leads to a high incidence of water-borne diseases. It is recommended that NGOs dig tube wells in the refugee areas in order to increase the supply of uncontaminated water.

Zabul is affected by frequent flooding from the Helmand river which is exacerbated by a high water table. It is recommended that NGOs investigate methods of achieving better drainage of excess water. Assistance is also required to increase the access of the spontaneous refugee settlement at Niatak to safe water.

The school attendance rate is extremely low above primary level in Khorasan but in Sistan-Baluchistan only one quarter of primary school age children attend school. NGOs could assist with the provision of additional resources for schools.

There is a need for an NGO to investigate the presence of street children in Zahedan to ascertain the extent to which they are at risk.

APPENDIX 1

MEMBERS OF TECHNICAL MISSION

Elizabeth Winter (Chair, British Agencies Afghanistan Group), Team Leader

Dr A.W. Hassani, Engineer, International Rescue Committee

Dr Rodger Doran, Health Co-ordinator, Save the Children (U.K.)

Peter Marsden, Information Coordinator, British Agencies Afghanistan Group

Turid Sand, Coordinator, International Consortium for Refugees in Iran, Tehran

Yngve Traeland, Programme Officer, International Consortium for Refugees in Iran, Tehran

ROADS IDENTIFIED BY DEPARTMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION AS IN NEED OF REPAIR

Nawin	(Enjil district)	
Zivak-Jandukhan	(")	7 km
Emam Shash Noor	(")	15 km
Burn Abad	(Ghorian district)	2 km
Shada	(")	4 km
Mamorram	(")	5 km
Kohsan	(Kohsan district)	10 km

Levelling of roads in Herat city by filling with gravel: 20 km

BRIDGES SURVEYED BY DEPARTMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION AND REQUIRING REPAIR

Mamizak	(Zendajan district)	4m x 3m
Shada	(")	3m x 4m
Awghah	(")	3m x 4m
Mahalai Rowzabagh	(Gozarah district)	5m x 4m
Siawashan	(")	20m x 7m
Jandah Khan	(")	4m x 4m
Sabzwari	(")	4m x 4m
Karta	(Herat city-Kandahar gate)	12m x 7m
Pushtun Zargun	(Pushtun Zargun district)	8m x 7m
Dehshara	(")	4m x 4m

CANALS IDENTIFIED BY DEPARTMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION AS IN NEED OF CLEARING AND REPAIR

Marmizah	(Zendajan district)	15 km
Roge	(Ghorian district)	6 km
Shabash	(")	10 km
Dehnow	(Gozarah district)	10 km
Jowi Now Malan	(")	20 km
Tizan	(")	18 km
Adwan	(")	2.5 km
Jwai Kuhnai	(")	20 km
Safied Rawan	(Enjil district)	19 km
Karbar	(")	20 km
7 Qulb	(")	9 km
Saleh Abad	(")	2.5 km
Kabofar Khan	(")	5 km
Shindand	(Shindand district)	18 km
Adraskan	(Adraskan district)	12 km
Foshkan	(Pushtun Zargun district)	18km
Shafloon	(")	20 km

EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

83 primary schools
3 madrasas
68 middle schools
25 lycees (of which 4 female - in Herat city)
1 faculty of health
1 institute of pedagogy
1 university

Total number of students = 56,815, of which 16,000 female
Total number of teachers = 1,696, of which 925 male and 771 female

KAREZES IDENTIFIED BY DEPARTMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION AS IN NEED OF CLEARING

Mirdand Payan	(Gozarah district)
Mirdand Bala	(")
S. Abdullah Mukhtar	(Enjil district)

FLUMES IDENTIFIED BY DEPARTMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION AS IN NEED OF CONSTRUCTION

Shahada	(Ghorian district)
Malan	(Gozarah district)
Gozarah	(")
Khuja Noor	(")
Kohnai Malam	(")
Kamuraq	(Pushtun Zargun district)
Murhsidabad	(Enjil district)
Chungar	(")

SYPHONS IDENTIFIED BY DEPARTMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION AS IN NEED OF CONSTRUCTION

Ju'i Kuhna	(Gozarah district)
Tizan	(")
Ju'i Kul Arbab Nazar	(")
Khuj Mohammed Shahab	(")
Nashin	(")
Alinjan	(Enjil district)

BUILDINGS IDENTIFIED BY DEPARTMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION AS IN NEED OF REPAIR

Lycee Raqza Bagh	(Gozarah district)
Nashim Hospital	(")
Noor Hospital	(Enjil district)
Lycee Sultan Ghysuddy Ghori	(Herat city)
Lycee Jami	(")
Gazargah primary school	(")
Lycee Guharshad	(")
Lycee Amir Ali Sher Nawali	(")
Pedagogic Institute	(")

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL MISSION UNDERTAKEN
TO IRAN AND WESTERN AFGHANISTAN
FROM 20TH NOVEMBER TO 16TH DECEMBER 1992
AS DELIVERED TO THE INTERNATIONAL
CONSORTIUM FOR REFUGEES IN IRAN (ICRI)

APPENDIX 2

FURTHER INFORMATION OF BENEFIT TO NGOS CONSIDERING PROGRAMMES IN WESTERN AFGHANISTAN

LOGISTICS

SOME COSTS

Labourer	1,500 Afghanis per day
Mason	5,000 Afghanis per day
Carpenter	5,000 Afghanis per day
Gravel	3,000 Afghanis per cubic metre
Rocks	5,000-15,000 Afghanis per cubic metre
Cement	2,300 Afghanis per 50kg bag
Steel bar	300-400 Afghanis per kg
Fuel wood	40 Afghanis per kg
Wooden beam	7,000 Afghanis per 5 metre length
Clay brick	5,000 Afghanis per 1000
Burned brick	25,000 - 30,000 Afghanis per 1,000
Cement pipe for karezes	10 million Afghanis per km

Cost of constructing 1 km gravel road, 12 metres wide, with 20 cm soil and 20 cm gravel: 7 million Afghanis

Cost of constructing 1 km gravel road 8 metres wide with 15cm gravel: 6 million Afghanis

Cost of constructing 1 km asphalt road, excluding cost of asphalt: 4 million Afghanis

Cost of constructing 1 km asphalt road, including cost of asphalt: 40 million Afghanis

Cost of cleaning 1 km length of canal: 600,000 Afghanis

COST OF BASIC ITEMS

Wheat	135 Afghanis per kg
Rice (top quality)	400-500 Afghanis per kg
Potatoes	100 Afghanis per kg
Grapes	150 Afghanis per kg
Apples	200-250 Afghanis per kg
Pomegranate	150 Afghanis per kg
Mutton/lamb	1,500 Afghanis per kg
I barrel diesel	45,000 Afghanis
1 barrel kerosene	56,000 Afghanis
1 barrel petrol	90,000 Afghanis

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL MISSION UNDERTAKEN TO IRAN AND WESTERN AFGHANISTAN FROM 20TH NOVEMBER TO 16TH DECEMBER 1992 AS DELIVERED TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR REFUGEES IN IRAN (ICRI)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

The objectives of the Technical Mission were:

(a) to identify assistance activities relating to Afghan refugees inside Iran on which NGOs could collaborate with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and UNHCR, with a minimum start-up delay.

(b) to evaluate rehabilitation needs in Western Afghanistan in order that project planning, fundraising and proposals may take place over the winter months and that actual rehabilitation activities may begin in early spring.

These objectives were identified with a view to securing the successful voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to Afghanistan and their reintegration.

The four members of the technical mission were accompanied by two people appointed to operate as a bridgehead team in Iran for an initial period of six months to facilitate NGO programmes.

The combined six-person team visited Tehran, Mashhad, Zahedan and Zabul in Iran and Herat in Afghanistan.

2. Iran

The mission was facilitated by the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for refugee affairs, and UNHCR.

The Iranian Government has provided for up to three million refugees since 1979 with very little international assistance.

The refugees are, for the most part, absorbed within the Iranian population and have access to basic services and rations. However, this access is, to an extent, limited as a result of their poor socio-economic status. The refugee presence has had social consequences.

The provinces of Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchistan have the highest Afghan refugee populations of the Iranian provinces. The refugees in Sistan-Baluchistan represent the poorest sector of an impoverished population. Because of long-standing trading links

It would be very helpful to the reconstruction process to be able to bring in personnel and supplies through and from Iran. To this end, the bridgehead team will hold discussions with the Iranian Government with a view to NGOs obtaining exemptions from customs duties or fees on the import or export of supplies and exemption from taxes on purchases within Iran. They will also discuss whether multiple entry visas could become more readily available for staff crossing the border regularly so as to facilitate the procurement of supplies, in particular.

Both the Government of Iran and NGOs will be learning from the initial experience of working together. Both parties will therefore need to take particular care to maintain a relationship of trust and mutual respect and an understanding of each other's capacity and constraints.

3. Western Afghanistan

The area was previously self-sufficient apart from Ghor which suffered from periodic famines. Heavy bombardment, resulting in the almost total destruction of the western suburbs of Herat and of the districts of Enjil and Zendajan to the south and south-west has led to a huge exodus of refugees to Iran. As a consequence the main area of previous cultivation along the Hari Rud valley has been neglected and agricultural yields are only a fraction of the pre-war level.

The basic infrastructure of health, education and other government services has also suffered considerably from the fourteen years of conflict.

It is expected that refugees will return in substantial numbers from the spring and the process of reconstructing houses, repairing irrigation systems and restoring agriculture is dependent on their return. However, they will need a considerable degree of support from UN agencies and NGOs, at least over the first year, up to the spring 1994 harvest.

The UN agencies do not have the capacity to meet the anticipated needs without a large NGO input. However, they have been very effective in bringing in the necessary supplies of wheat etc. WFP expects to be able to ensure food security, provided that the number of refugees returning from Iran next year does not exceed half a million.

NGOs are needed to work with UNHCR to provide returnees with tools and wheat while they rebuild their homes and to coordinate other inputs at the local level.

Other NGOs are required to assist with the repair of irrigation systems, provision of agricultural inputs, veterinary care, improvement in the access to safe water, drainage, sanitation, health, education and road repair, in particular.

It is hoped that refugees will not return in large numbers before the spring or that the number who return then will not be beyond the capacity of UN agencies and NGOs to support. Donors and agencies with an emergency capacity are nonetheless requested to

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